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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of level of self-disclosure, sex of discloser, and sex of observer on perceptions of interpersonal communication competence. Subjects were 165 undergraduate college students who listened to audiotapes of three different versions of a fictitious conversation between two people given the androgynous names of Pat and Chris. In each tape, Pat was the discloser and Chris the target. Three of the tapes were made by female confederates and three by males. In the first version of the tape, the discloser answered the target's questions in a straight forward manner using a low level of self-disclosure; in the second, the discloser answered at a medium level of self-disclosure, revealing personal information to the target. After hearing the tapes, the subjects were given two copies of a communication competence instrument and were asked to rate their perceptions of the communication behavior of the discloser and of the target. Results indicated that observers' perceptions of interpersonal communication competence were significantly affected by the discloser's sex and level of self-disclosure, with female disclosers perceived as more competent and more supportive than male disclosers. (FL)

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THE EFFECTS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AND SEX ON PERCEPTIONS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of level of self-disclosure, sex of discloser, and sex of observer on perceptions of interpersonal communication competence. Results indicated that observers' perceptions of interpersonal communication competence were significantly affected by the discloser's sex and level of self-disclosure. In addition, perceptions of the disclosure target's competence were affected by the observer's sex and the discloser's level of disclosure. Implications for future research are discussed.

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Abstract

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Recent literature in communication and psychology reflects the continuing efforts of social science researchers to examine the nature of self-disclosure and the various constructs to which it is related (e.g., Wheeless, 1978; Prisbell & Andersen, 1980, Chelune, Sultan, & Williams, 1980; McAllister, 1980). One variable which has not been directly examined with respect to self-disclosure is interpersonal communication competence. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the implications of self-disclosure for perceptions of interpersonal communication competence.

Self-Disclosure

Several definitions of self-disclosure have been proposed. Cozby (1973) defined self-disclosure as simply "any information about himself which Person A communicates verbally to a Person B" (p. 73). In order to distinguish self-disclosure from other types of information-giving behavior, Pearce and Sharp (1973) identified self-disclosure as occurring "when one person voluntarily tells another person things about himself which the other is unlikely to know or to discover from other sources" (p. 414). A more recent conceptualization offered by Wheeless and Grotz (1976) suggested that "a self-disclosure is any message about the self that a person communicates to another" (p. 338).

Inherent in the conceptualization given by Wheeless and Grotz is the implication that, since self-disclosure is a kind of message, it may be evaluated along several dimensions. Chelune (1975) discussed five potentially important aspects of self-disclosure: amount, intimacy, duration, affective manner of presentation, and flexibility of disclosure patterns. Through factor analysis of self-report data, Wheeless and Grotz (1976) were able to identify five distinct dimensions of self-disclosure: intent, amount, positiveness/negativeness, honesty/accuracy, and general depth.

The influence of several of these dimensions of self-disclosure has been tested empirically. For example, Gilbert (1977) examined the intimacy/depth dimension by varying the levels at which a confederate disclosed to experimental subjects. Findings indicated that the high discloser was liked less, perceived as behaving more inappropriately, and made subjects feel more uncomfortable than the low discloser. Other studies report consistent results concerning the effects of valence of disclosure; for example, that disclosure of desirable information results in greater attraction than disclosure of undesirable information (Dalto, Ajzen, & Kaplan, 1979) and that positive and neutral self-disclosure result in greater communication satisfaction than negative self-disclosure (Hecht, Shepherd, & Hall, 1979).

Perhaps the most well-documented findings are those dealing with sex differences in self-disclosure. Several studies have concluded that males are more reluctant to reveal intimate information about themselves than are females (Jourard, 1971; Morgan, 1976; Chelune, 1976a, Gilbert, 1976; Pellegrini, Hicks, Meyers-Winton, & Antal, 1978; Lombardo & Berzonsky, 1979; DeForest & Stone, 1980). Males have been perceived as better adjusted (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976) and more likable (Chelune, 1976b) when they engage in little or no self-disclosure, while females are seen as better adjusted or more likable when they do self-disclose.

Cissna and Keating (1979) found a significant correlation between a high self-disclosing husband and the wife's feelings of confirmation; however, there was no significant relationship between a high self-disclosing wife and the husband's feelings of confirmation. More recently, Chelune (1981) reported that observers consistently overestimated the actual amount of males' self-disclosing behavior, while underestimating that of females. Lombardo and Berzonsky (1979) have offered an explanation which relates to these observed sex differences in self-disclosure: "American females are encouraged to self-disclose while self-disclosure in males is not encouraged . . . these norms are adhered to especially by males" (p. 282).

Self-disclosure has been found to be related to positive aspects of interpersonal relationships, such as trust (Wheeless & Grotz, 1977; McAllister, 1980) and interpersonal solidarity (Wheeless, 1976, 1978). Willingness to self-disclose has been reported to be related to personal health, satisfaction, successfully working with others and being understood by others (Pearce & Sharp, 1973); higher ratings of social skills (Chelune et al., 1980); and likability (Halverson & Shore, 1969).. Self-disclosure has also been associated with feeling good (Prisbell & Andersen, 1980) and with demonstrating interpersonal flexibility and openness (Halverson & Shore, 1969). Clearly, several of these constructs suggest a relationship between self-disclosure and interpersonal communication competence.

Interpersonal Communication Competence

Self-disclosure has been included as a component or skill in several conceptualizations of interpersonal communication competence (Bienvenu, 1971; Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Macklin & Rossiter, 1976; Bochner & Yerby, 1977; Berryman-Fink & Pederson, 1981). However, in light of the findings discussed earlier in this paper, it seems inappropriate to unquestioningly endorse self-disclosure as

a skill related to competence. Several variables can potentially affect the perceived appropriateness of self-disclosure in any given situation. Over-disclosure can result in negative evaluations (Gilbert, 1977), and sex of self-discloser may also have an impact on evaluations of competence. Thus, self-disclosure is best viewed not as a basic component of competence, but rather as a behavior which, when exhibited appropriately, is one index of competent communication behavior.

A recent conceptualization by Wiemann (1975, 1977) does not include self-disclosure as a basic element of competence. Wiemann defines interpersonal communication competence as:

> the ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation. (1975, p. 26)

This definition was translated into a definitional model with five dimensions: empathy, affiliation/support, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and social relaxation. The behavioral flexibility dimension seems particularly relevant to the study of self-disclosure, since appropriateness is a crucial factor in the evaluation of self-disclosure. As Chelune (1981) has stated, "The ability to appropriately modulate one's communication in response to the social situation or context in which one finds himself or herself is considered to be an important element of effective social communication" (p. 275). Accordingly, the Wiemann model of interpersonal communication competence was adopted as the operationalization of interpersonal communication competence in the present study.

Rationale and Hypotheses

While the effects of varying levels of self-disclosure on several interpersonal variables have been examined, and while self-disclosure has been included in the

past as an interpersonal communication competence skill, no previous study has examined perceptions of interpersonal communication competence as a dependent variable with respect to varying levels and conditions of self-disclosure. Based on previous findings regarding the undesirable effects of over-intimate disclosure (Gilbert, 1977), the following hypothesis is offered:

H_1: A person engaging in a high level of self-disclosure to a stranger will be perceived as less competent than a person engaging in a medium or low level of self-disclosure.

Several studies cited earlier provide evidence to support the conclusion that males disclose less than females. Lombardo and Berzonsky (1979) have discussed the strength of the norm against males disclosing. It should follow, then, that males who break this norm by engaging in self-disclosure will be perceived as less interpersonally competent than females who self-disclose:

H_2: Males who self-disclose will be perceived as less competent than females who self-disclose.

While some past studies have relied on self-report techniques to examine self-disclosure (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958; Wheeless & Grotz, 1976; Rosenfeld, 1979), other studies have employed a third-party observer to rate the behavior of conversational participants. For example, a study by Banikiotes, Kubinski, and Pursell (1981) reported an interaction between sex of discloser and sex of observer, such that males observers rated females disclosers higher than male disclosers on adjustment, likability, and desirability as an experimental partner. Thus the third hypothesis in the present study makes the following prediction:

H_3: Male observers will perceive females who self-disclose as more competent than males who self-disclose.

In order to examine the relative importance of the dimensions of Wiemann's

(1975) model of communication competence, supplementary data anlysis was conducted using multivariate statistical methods. No specific hypotheses were made; rather, the following research question was investigated:

> RQ: What specific dimensions of interpersonal communication competence are affected by level of disclosure, sex of discloser, and/or sex of observer?

Method

Subjects. Subjects in this study were 165 undergraduates (80 females and 85 males) enrolled in a sophomore level communication course at a large midwestern university. Subjects randomly selected themselves by signing up for one of six experimental sessions. Sessions were conducted on three consecutive days. The number of subjects participating in each session ranged from 25 to 29, with an approximately equal number of male and female subjects being exposed to each experimental condition.

Materials. Audiotapes were made of three different versions of a fictitious conversation between Pat and Chris, described as two participants in a career development workshop. Pat was the Discloser and Chris was the Target in each case. Two pairs of confederates (one male pair and one female pair) rehearsed and recorded each of the three versions of the conversation, yielding a total of six different audiotapes. The selection of androgynous names (Pat and Chris) for the two taped interactants allowed for the use of the same script and questionnaire packet in all six experimental conditions. In addition, the use of audiotaped conversations eliminated possible confounding effects from visual nonverbal cues (Chelune, 1976b) or physical atractiveness of conversants (Pellegrini et al., 1978).

The three versions of the conversation comprised three conditions of disclosive behavior. In the first version, the Discloser answered the Target's

questions about education and career goals in a straight-forward manner using a low level of self-disclosure. In the second condition, the Discloser's answers were at a medium level of self-disclosure. In the third version, the Discloser engaged in a high level of self-disclosure, revealing personal information to the Target. The Target's questions and comments were exactly the same in all three conditions.

Procedures. At the beginning of each session one of the researchers read the following instructions to the subjects:

> The audiotaped interaction you are about to hear took place as a part of a career development workshop. In this conversation participants discussed their educational backgrounds and career goals. Following the reading of the instructions you will listen to a segment of the taped interaction. Please listen carefully to the participants' conversation. After you have heard the tape you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire concerning your impressions of each participant's communication behavior. Please be sure to answer every item. Your participation in this study is confidential; therefore, we request that you do not put your name on the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

After the audiotape was played, subjects were given two copies of Wiemann's (1975) communication competence instrument, and were asked to rate their perceptions of the communication behavior of the Discloser and the Target.

Analysis of Data. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was determined for total competence scores and subscale scores for the Discloser and the Target. The total competence scores for the Discloser and the Target were each subjected to a 3 x 2 x 2 (disclosure level x sex of discloser x sex of observer) analysis of variance. Subscale scores for the dimensions of Wiemann's (1975) instrument were analyzed using the Clyde MANOVA program[1] to determine the effects of disclosure level, sex of the discloser, and sex of the

[1]Distributed by Clyde Computing Service.

observer. All univariate analyses were conducted using SPSS programs (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1975).

Results

Reported reliability coefficients of Wiemann's communication competence scale have been high (Wiemann, 1975). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was computed for total competence scores of the Discloser and the Target, as well as for the subscale scores. Overall total competence score reliabilities were very high; a coefficient of .94 was obtained for the Discloser's total competence rating, and a coefficient of .95 was obtained for the Target's total competence rating. Reliability checks performed on the Discloser's six subscale scores were moderately high: general competence = .82, empathy = .79, affiliation/support = .78, behavioral flexibility = .75, interaction management = .73, and social relaxation = .68. Similar subscale reliability coefficients were obtained for the Target's subscale scores: general competence = .80, empathy = .79, affiliation/support = .79, behavioral flexibility = .77, interaction management = .78, and social relaxation = .70.

A 3 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance was performed using the SPSS ANOVA regression approach (Nie et al., 1975) to compensate for unqeual cell frequencies. Relevant means and standard deviations for each cell are reported in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Separate ANOVAs were performed on the Discloser's and Target's total competence scores.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that a high level of self-disclosure to a stranger would be perceived as less competent than low or medium levels of disclosure. Results of the ANOVA on Discloser's total competence score supported Hypothesis 1.

The results of this ANOVA, presented in Table 2, revealed a significant main effect for disclosure level, $F(2,153) = 3.02$, $p < .05$. Post hoc multiple comparison procedures using Dunn's test indicated that the Discloser was perceived as more competent in the low ($\bar{X} = 120.50$) and medium ($\bar{X} = 123.09$) self-disclosure conditions than in the high ($\bar{X} = 113.77$) self-disclosure condition.

Insert Table 2 about here

Hypothesis 2 predicted that male disclosers would be perceived as less competent communicators than female disclosers. The ANOVA results for the Discloser's total competence score (see Table 2) also revealed a significant main effect for the sex of the discloser, $F(1,153) = 7.09$, $p < .01$. The male Discloser ($\bar{X} = 117.73$) was perceived as less communicatively competent than the female Discloser ($\bar{X} = 126.32$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was also supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that male observers would perceive self-disclosive behavior as more competent for the female Discloser than for the male Discloser. Results of the ANOVA on the Discloser's total competence score indicated no significant main effect or interaction effect for sex of observer (see Table 2). However, results of the ANOVA on the Target's total competence score, presented in Table 3, revealed a significant disclosure level x sex of rater interaction, $F(2,153) = 3.15$, $p < .05$.

Insert Table 3 about here

Relevant cell means were graphed and Dunn's procedure was employed to determine significant differences in pairwise comparisons. Dunn's procedure indicated that male observers ($\bar{X} = 139.67$) perceived the Target as significantly ($p < .01$) more competent than did female observers ($\bar{X} = 132.04$) at medium

levels of disclosure, while female observers ($\bar{X}$ = 139.22) perceived the Target as significantly ($p < .01$) more competent than did male observers ($\bar{X}$ = 128.49) at high levels of disclosure. The pattern of these cell means is presented graphically in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Generally, the results of the ANOVAs performed on the Discloser's total competence score and the Target's total competence score provide support for Hypotheses 1 and 2. Although the Target's total competence score ANOVA did indicate a significant disclosure level x sex of rater interaction, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The reported interaction effect does suggest that the disclosure level of one interactant (in this case the Discloser) affects competence ratings of the other interactant (the Target).

The research question proposed earlier sought to examine the effects of the experimental manipulations on the subscale scores of the total competence instrument. Wiemann's (1975) communication competence scale is comprised of six dimensions: general competence, empathy, affiliation/support, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and social relaxation. In order to determine the effect of disclosure level, sex of discloser, and sex of rater on individual subscale ratings, a MANOVA using Wilk's Lambda criterion was performed on the six subscale scores of both the Discloser and the Target. No significant effects were observed for the Target's subscale scores. Results of the MANOVA performed on the Discloser's subscale scores revealed a main effect for disclosure level, F (12, 296) = 2.53, $p < .05$, R^2 = .31; and a main effect for sex of the discloser, F (12, 296) = 2.33, $p < .01$, R^2 = .34. A significant three-way interaction effect for disclosure level x sex of discloser x sex of rater was also obtained, F (12, 296) = 1.83, $p < .05$, R^2 = .35. Univariate ANOVAs were

utilized for interpretation of significant effects, and are reported below.

Disclosure Levels. Univariate ANOVA results revealed a significant effect for the general competence subscale, $F(2, 153) = 7.35$, $p < .01$. Dunn's procedure performed on cell means of the general competence subscale indicated that both low ($\bar{X} = 23.68$) and medium ($\bar{X} = 24.22$) levels of disclosure were perceived as more generally competent that the high level of disclosure ($\bar{X} = 21.52$).

ANOVA results also revealed a significant effect for the affiliation/support subscale, $F(2, 153) = 10.97$, $p < .001$. Dunn's procedure indicated that medium levels of disclosure ($\bar{X} = 21.11$) were rated as more affiliative/supportive than high levels of disclosure ($\bar{X} = 18.63$).

A significant effect for the behavioral flexibility subscale was found $F(2,153) = 8.54$, $p < .01$. In this instance, Dunn's procedure revealed that medium levels of disclosure ($\bar{X} = 16.79$) were perceived as more flexible than high levels of disclosure ($\bar{X} = 15.50$).

Sex of Discloser. Univariate ANOVAs revealed significant effects for the general competence subscale, $F(2,153) = 5.41$, $p < .01$, and for the affiliation/support subscale, $F(2,153) = 4.65$, $p < .01$. The female Discloser ($\bar{X} = 24.12$) was rated as generally more competent than the male Discloser ($\bar{X} = 22.17$). Similarly, the female Discloser ($\bar{X} = 20.95$) was perceived as more affiliative/supportive than the male Discloser ($\bar{X} = 18.72$).

Sex of Rater. Although the MANOVA, like the total competence score ANOVAs reported earlier, did not indicate a significant main effect for the sex of the observer, the ANOVA revealed a three-way interaction between disclosure level, sex of discloser, and sex of observer. A follow-up univariate ANOVA revealed a significant effect for the social relaxation subscale, $F(2,153) = 4.31$, $p < .05$. Cell means were graphed and Dunn's procedure was employed to locate significant differences. Cell mean graphs are presented in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Post hoc analysis indicated that males rated the male Discloser in the low disclosure condition ($\bar{X}$ = 17.92) as significantly more relaxed than females rating the male Discloser in the low disclosure condition ($\bar{X}$ = 14.93).

Generally, the MANOVA performed on the Discloser's six subscale scores suggests main effects for disclosure level and sex of discloser, and an interaction effect for all three independent variables. Disclosure level effects were attributable to the general competence, behavioral flexibility, and affiliation/support subscales. The effect of sex of the discloser is discussed in terms of the general competence and affililiation/support subscales. The reported interaction effect is attributable to the social relaxation subscale.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that perceptions of interpersonal communication competence are significantly affected by the discloser's sex and level of disclosure. Specifically, people disclsing high levels of intimate information were perceived as less competent than people disclosing low or medium levels of information. This finding supports similar conclusions offered by Gilbert (1977), Dalto et al. (1979), and Hecht et al. (1979). It should be noted that in the high disclosure condition in the present study, the content of the Discloser's self-disclosure was primarily negative. Past research has indicated that inappropriate self-disclosure, such as intimate or negative self-disclosure to a stranger, is related to loneliness (Chelune et al., 1980), and may be seen as emotionally unhealthy (Chelune, 1976b; Gilbert, 1976) or otherwise evaluated in a negative manner (Hecht et al., 1979; Bradac, Tardy, & Hosman, 1980). Thus the findings reported in this paper may be due in part to the fact that disclosures were made to a stranger, and to the negativity of

disclosures given in the high disclosure condition.

The sex of the discloser affects perceptions of the discloser's competence. The results of this study indicated that the female Discloser was perceived as more competent than the male Discloser, thereby supporting the findings of Derlega and Chaikin (1976) and Chelune (1976).

Unlike the results of Banikiotes et al. (1981), this study suggests that the sex of the observer does not significantly affect perceptions of a discloser's competence. However, the sex of the observer, in conjunction with the sex of the discloser and the level of disclosure, may affect the perceptions of the target's competence. Males perceived the Target as more competent in medium disclosure conditions. However, females perceived the Target as more competent than males when high levels of self-disclosure were involved. This finding emphasizes the importance of examining the complete interaction when assessing ratings of interpersonal communication competence. In short, these findings suggest that perceptions of competence are affected by the behavior of others as well as by the behavior of the communicator in question. This logic strongly supports the rationale offered by Wiemann (1975) in his discussion of the behavioral flexibility component of competence, and by Bradac et al. (1980) in their discussion of reciprocity in disclosive interaction. In light of the paucity of research which examines the target of disclosure (Gilbert, 1977), the results of this study should be viewed as exploratory rather than conclusive.

Wiemann (1975, 1977), Brunner and Phelps (1980), and Jones and Brunner (1981) illuminate the important of examining competence ratings in terms of the specific dimensions of competence posited by Wiemann. Utilization of multivariate analysis of variance, as suggested by Hecht et al. (1979) for use in research on self-disclosure, leads to the conclusion that specific dimensions of competent behavior are responsible for perceptions of total competence.

The level of disclosure affects perceptions of general competence, affiliation/support, and behavioral flexibility. Consistent with perceptions of total competence, people engaging in low and medium rather than high levels of disclosure were perceived as more generally competent. Likewise, people engaging in medium levels of disclosure were perceived as more affiliative/supportive and more behaviorally flexible than people engaging in high levels of disclosure. The negative nature of the self-disclosure in the high disclosure condition probably affected these results somewhat.

The sex of the discloser affects perceptions of the general competence and affiliation/support dimensions. Female disclosers are perceived as generally more competent and more affiliative/supportive than male disclosers. These findings lend additional support to the results of the total competence score ANOVAs and to research conclusions that female self-disclosers are perceived as better adjusted (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976) and more likable (Chelune, 1976) than males who self-disclose.

The social relaxation dimension of competence appeared to be responsible for the interaction effect of level of disclosure, sex of discloser, and sex of observer on perceptions of total competence. Male observers rated the male in the low disclosure condition as more relaxed than did female observers. Possibly, the norm-invoked expectation that males do not or should not engage in substantial disclosive behavior contributed to the perceptions of relaxation as an indicator of normal social interaction.

Overall, disclosive behavior seems to affect perceptions of general competence and affiliation/support to a large extent, and perceptions of behavioral flexibility and social relaxation to a lesser extent. Further examination of the relationship between disclosure and the competence dimensions may clarify these findings and may explicate conditions in which self-disclosure affects perceptions

of empathy and interaction management.

Generally, researchers have not examined the effects of self-disclosure on perceptions of communication competence. Several limitations of this study provide interesting avenues of exploration for future research in this area. Researchers may examine the effects of mixed-sex rather than same-sex dyads on perceptions of competence. Such research could investigate the effects of a female disclosing to a male, and a male disclosing to a female. In addition, Bradac et al. (1980) note that the violation of the norm of reciprocity with respect to self-disclosure may result in a negative judgment of the non-reciprocator. In this study, the Target maintained medium levels of disclosure regardless of the Discloser's behavior. Further investigation of the effects of recporicity may involve replication of this study with Target reciprocating the levels of disclosure exhibited by the Discloser.

The results of this study reveal that the level of self-disclosure and the sex of the discloser significantly affect independent observers' perceptions of the discloser's communication competence. Further research is needed to clarify the effects of the type of disclosure, the dyadic composition of the interaction, and the reciprocity of disclosure on perceptions of interpersonal communication competence.

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Table 1

Relevant Means and Standard Deviations of Discloser's and Target's Total Competence Scores by Disclosure Level, Sex of Discloser and Sex of Observer

Discloser's Total Competence Scores

Sex of Observer		Male Discloser			Female Discloser		
		Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Male:	$\bar{X}$	108.50	123.15	104.79	133.50	125.35	116.73
	SD	22.52	16.96	18.70	12.24	16.50	23.50
Female:	$\bar{X}$	117.64	122.21	112.57	123.40	120.83	120.79
	SD	20.63	21.18	25.90	21.64	21.41	21.88
Total:	$\bar{X}$	112.52	122.67	108.68	127.89	123.48	118.69
	SD	20.63	19.47	22.52	18.49	19.39	22.42

Target's Total Competence Scores

Sex of Observer		Male Target			Female Target		
		Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Male:	$\bar{X}$	127.00	140.15	131.64	131.75	139.18	125.33
	SD	15.40	13.56	25.14	21.76	11.92	24.42
Female:	$\bar{X}$	138.36	133.07	138.79	132.87	131.00	139.64
	SD	18.80	15.73	15.19	26.68	21.32	24.51
Total:	$\bar{X}$	132.00	136.48	135.25	132.37	135.79	132.24
	SD	17.57	14.88	20.70	24.17	16.63	24.94

Table 2

ANOVA of Discloser's Total Competence Scores by

Disclosure Level, Sex of Discloser, and Sex of Observer

Source	df	MS	F
Disclosure Level (Dis)	2	1289.74	3.02*
Sex of Discloser (D)	1	3029.43	7.09**
Sex of Observer (O)	1	33.18	.08
Dis x D	2	771.72	1.81
Dis x O	2	282.07	.66
D x O	1	797.57	1.87
Dis x D x O	2	266.61	.62
Residual	153	427.24	
Total	164	453.47	

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Table 3

ANOVA of Target's Total Competence Scores by

Disclosure Level, Sex of Discloser, and Sex of Observer

Source	df	MS	F
Disclosure Level (Dis)	2	152.11	.38
Sex of Discloser (D)	1	96.77	.24
Sex of Observer (O)	1	394.56	.98
Dis x D	2	18.69	.05
Dis x O	2	1269.69	3.15*
D x O	1	19.72	.05
Dis x D x O	2	255.55	.63
Residual	153	402.90	
Total	164	400.35	

*$p < .05$

Figure 1

Cell Mean Graph of Target's Total Competence Scores:

Disclosure Level x Sex of Observer Interaction

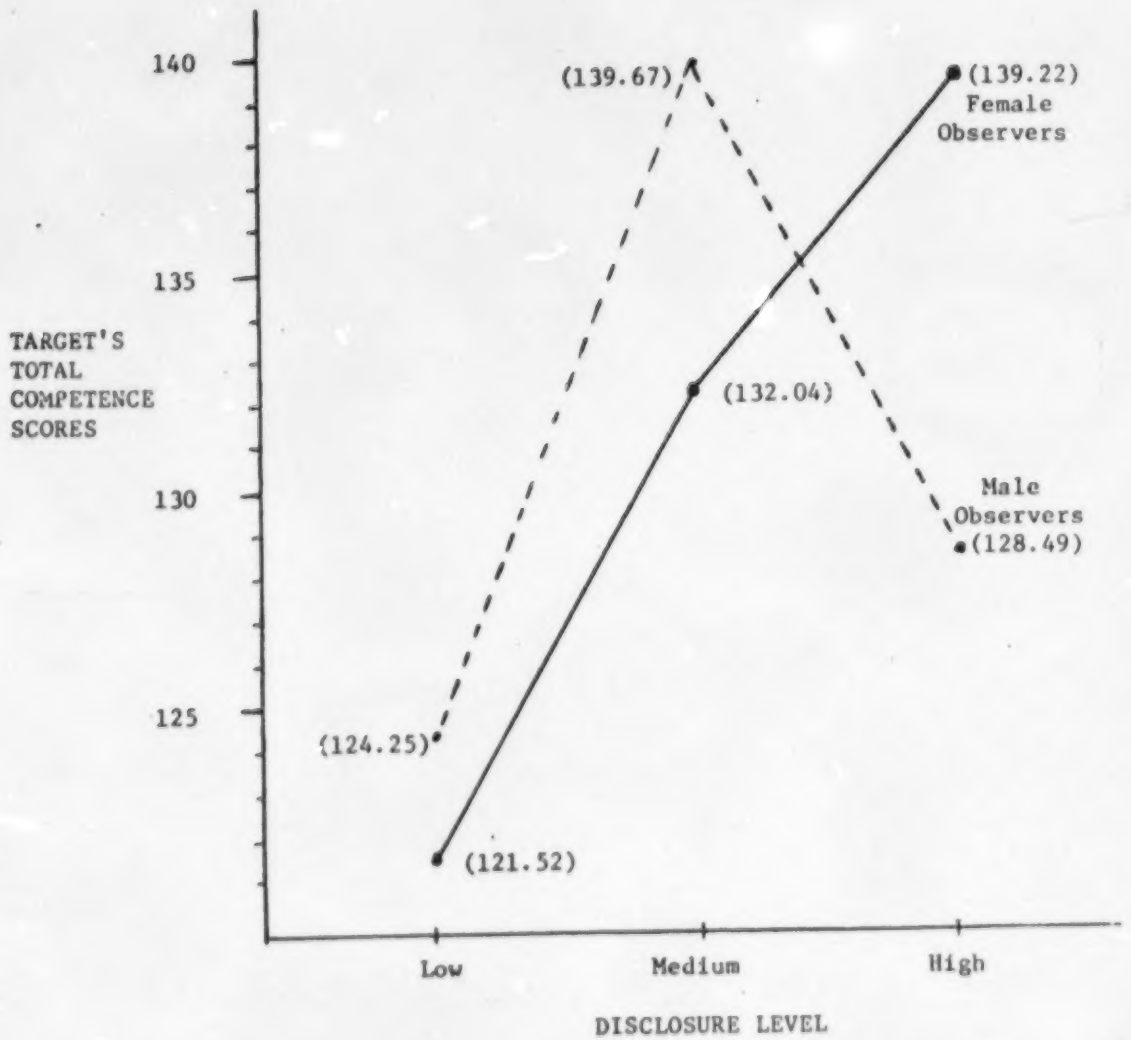

Figure 2

Cell Mean Graphs of Discloser's Social Relaxation Subscale Scores: Disclosure Level x Sex of Discloser x Sex of Observer Interaction